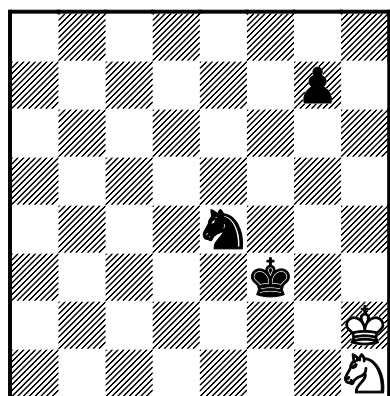


Grandmaster Richard Réti's endgames

PAL BENKO

Réti was born in 1889 in Hungary (now Slovakia) and in his short life achieved outstanding performances besides competitive chess. He held the world record in blindfold chess then with 29 boards. He brought new things to opening theory too and he represented it not only by his own games but also by his publications. He came into the floodlights hundred years ago in the Hungarian Championship. The young Réti scored 7½ from 14 games against the top masters; in particular he already proved his endgame skills in his games.

B.1. A. Demeter – R. Réti
Szekesfehervar 1907



Black to play

The imprisoned knight results fatal consequences.

74...g6! 75.Kg1 g5 76.Kh2 g4 77.Kg1 Sg3 78.Sf2 Se2+ 79.Kf1 g3 80.Sh3 g2+ 81.Ke1 Kg3 White resigned.

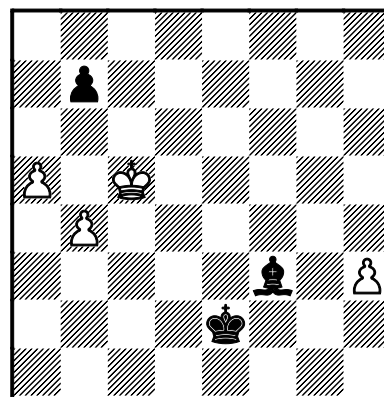
The “Excelsior” theme (a pawn makes it all the way to promote) in practice. It fits his artistic spirit: present a lot by little material.

He became a famous endgame author and now I present some his works .

His ideas are usually excellent but there are some errors. I can best pay tribute to his memory if I restore those while keeping their original spirit.

Bleak Bishop

B.2. R. Réti
1922



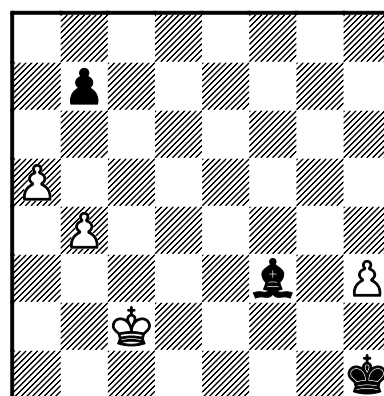
White to play and win (?)

1.Kd4 Kf2 2.h4 Kg3 3.Ke3 Bg4 4.b5 Kxh4 5.b6 Bc8 6.Kf4 and then Ke5-d6-c7 wins.

But after 2.h4 Be2! refutes. For example 3.Ke4 Kg2 4.Ke3 Kf1 5.Kf4 Kf2 6.Kg5 Ke3.

We can correct it by not allowing the bishop to come to e2.

B.3. R. Réti 1922
version by P.Benko

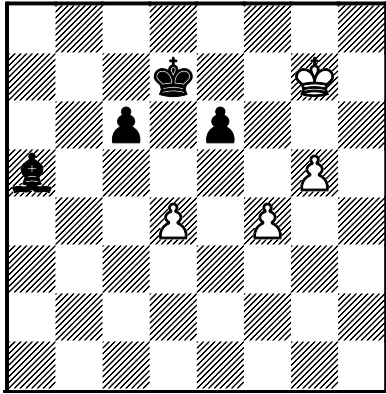


White to play and win

1.h4! (1.Kd2? Bc6! 2.h4 Be8) **1...Kg2** **2.Kd2** (2.Kd3? Kf2 3.b5 Be2+) **2...Kg3** **3.Ke3** and we are in the win given by Réti.

Concealed Cook

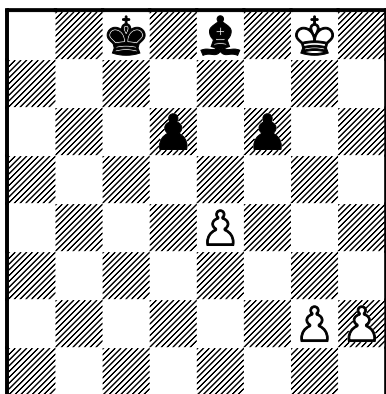
B.4. R. Réti
1928



White to play and draw (?)

After 1.Kf7 Bc3 2.d5! cxd5 3.g6 Kd6 4.Kf8 Bb2 5.Kf7 the idea is a positional draw since Black cannot play his pawns because those would close his bishop diagonal. But in the other alternative 1.Kf7 Bc3 2.d5! cxd5! 3.g6 Bh8! - a surprising continuation - 4.Kg8 (f5 d4;) 4...Bb2! opens the way for the c-pawn so that 5.Kf7 c5 6.f5 c4 7.f6 c3 etc. wins for Black. For correction I proposed pushing the whole position one file to the right to eliminate the 3....Bh8! cook. However, I thought this endgame deserved more.

B.5. R. Réti 1928
version by P. Benko



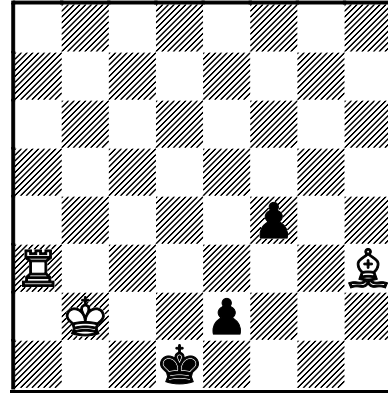
White to play and draw

1.g4! (1.Kg7? f5! wins) **1...Kd8** (Bc6 2.Kg7, or Kd7 2.Kf8!) **2.h4** (2.Kf8? Bd7 3.h3 Be6 wins) **2...Ke7** **3.h5** **Bc6** **4.e5!** **fxe5** (dxe5 5.h6 Be4 6.Kg7 Bd3 7.Kg8 etc. draws) **5.h6** **Be4** **6.g5** **d5** **7.Kg7** **d4** **8.g6** **d3** **9.h7** **d2** **10.h8Q** **d1Q** **11.Qh4+** draws.

Here the new line has also been enriched with the “Excelsior” theme.

Stalemate? Mate!

B.6. R. Réti
1923



White to play and win

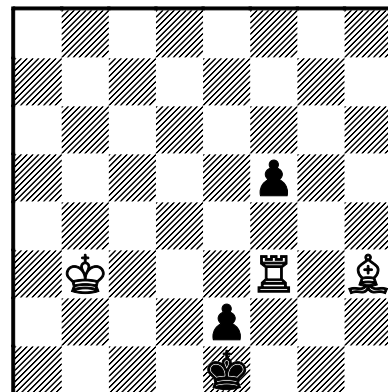
The intention is 1.Rd3+ Ke1 2.Rf3 Kd2 (Kd1; Bg4) 3.Bf1! e1Q 4.Rd3 mate.

But there is also a simpler game-like solution:

1.Bg4 Kd2 2.Bxe2 Kxe2 3.Kc1! f3 4.Ra2+ Ke1 (Ke3; Kd1) 5.Ra8 f2 6.Re8+ wins.

If we put the a3 rook on g3 as a start it would eliminate the double solution but such a start does not look nice. Here is the refined version:

B.7. R. Réti 1923
version by P. Benko

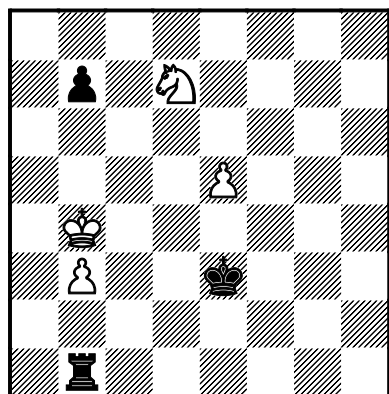


White to play and win

1.Kc2! **f4** **2.Kb2!** (2.Kd3? Kd1 3.Bg4 e1S+) **2...Kd2** (Kd1 3.Bg4 e1Q 4.Rd3 mate) **3.Bf1!** **e1Q** **4.Rd3** mate.

Double Defect

B.8. R. Réti
1928



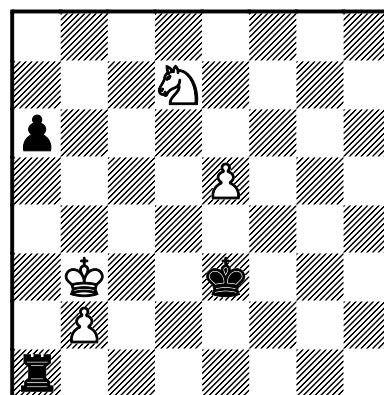
White to play and win (?)

1.e6 Kd4 (Chéron) 2.Se5 Rh1 3.e7 Rh8 4.Sf7 Re8 5.Sd6 Rxe7 6.Sf5+ wins. Or 1.e6 Kf4 2.e7 Re1 3.Sf6 was the winning idea but Chéron cooked it by 1.e6 Kf2! 2.Se5 Rg1 3.e7 Rg8 4.Kc5 Re8 5.Sg6 Ke3 6.b4 Ke4 7.Kd6 Kd4 8.b5 Kc4 9.b6 Kb5 10.Kc7 Ka6 draw.

The well-known cook hunter put the b3 pawn on b2 and placed the king on b3 as a correction but this also proved to be false after 1.e6 Kd2! 2.Se5 Rh1 3.e7 Rh3+! 4.Kb4 Rh8 5.Kc5 Kc2 6.b4 Re8 7.Kd6 Kb3 draw. Very

unfortunate. Hopefully my version makes this piece of work correct and final.

B.9. R. Réti 1928
version A. Chéron; correction P. Benko



White to play and win

Now after **1.e6 Kd2 2.Se5 Rh1 3.e7 Rh3+ 4.Ka2! Rh8 5.Sc4+ Kc2 6.Sd6** There is no Ra8 mate now, since after **6...Rh5 7.b4** White wins. The other lines are as in the original study. The centralised knight dominates the board.

Réti started composing endgames only during his twenties (about 60 studies). He suddenly died when he was only 40 years old. Yet, he still is alive in his works.